

NEWS AND VIEWS FROM THE USSR

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April 27, 1988

SOVIET GOVERNMENT STATEMENT ON GENEVA ACCORDS

Moscow. April 26. TASS. -- The following is the full Soviet Government statement issued here today:

The agreements on a political settlement of the situation relating to Afghanistan signed in mid-April in Geneva remain in the focus of attention of political circles and the world public.

Their signature has been hailed practically unanimously as an event of exceptional importance and tremendous international significance creating the external conditions required to settle the Afghanistan problem.

This view of the completed Geneva process is only natural. An important breakthrough has been made in defusing one of the more complex contemporary regional conflicts, whose reverberations were felt most acutely far beyond the geographical region in which it was developing.

By their significance, the signature of the Geneva accords ranks along the Soviet-American treaty on the elimination of intermediate-range and shorter-range missiles.

In both cases, success has proved possible owing to the readiness of all sides to take account of one another's interests. Just as the treaty, the Geneva agreements demonstrate that new political thinking can take the upper hand over the psychology of confrontation and over outdated stereotypes in international politics.

The path to completing the Geneva process has not been easy. There were ups and downs as well as hopes and disappointments along the road, but in the long run it is realism, common sense and the desire of all sides involved in the settlement process to reach a mutually acceptable understanding that have prevailed.

The decisive impulse was given by the statements of Mikhail Gorbachev, General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee, and President Najibullah of the Republic of Afghanistan on February 8, 1988.

At their meeting in Tashkent on April 7, 1988, Gorbachev and Najibullah were able to state that thanks to constructive interaction among all those involved in the settlement efforts, the last barriers to signing the agreements have been cleared away.

Much credit for the successful outcome of the Geneva process belongs to the U.N. Secretary-General and his personal envoy to the talks. This bears out once again the U.N. potential for settling crises.

The Geneva agreements are a balance of commitments and interests. The commitments include the cessation of an undeclared war against Afghanistan and the adoption of essential measures to plug the source of that war in Pakistani territory (relevant international guarantees have been given on this score).

The problem of securing the return of Afghan refugees to their fatherland is being resolved. Conditions are being created for them to be able to return unhindered to their homes and to a peaceful life in their country.

The agreements determine the time-frame and phases for the return of Soviet troops home from Afghanistan where they have been staying at the request of the Afghan Government.

Their withdrawal will begin on May 15, 1988, and be completed not later than February 15, 1989. Our country is waiting for its sons who have helped a friendly neighboring nation that has found itself in trouble.

The Soviet people will never forget their exploit and will hold sacred the memory of those who have laid down their lives on Afghan soil.

The further destiny of the political settlement regarding Afghanistan now depends on how responsibly, consistently and vigorously the entire complex of the commitments assumed by all the sides will be implemented. The Soviet Union intends to act fully in keeping with the Geneva accords, firmly adhering to their provisions. There should be no doubt to this effect: The agreement about the withdrawal of Soviet troops, just as other obligations of the parties, is irreversible. The Afghan Government proclaimed its determination to comply with its obligations honestly and consistently. A mechanism of verification under United Nations auspices is being established in keeping with the agreements. This enhances the degree of confidence about the implementation of the accords.

The stance of certain politicians and statesmen cannot but cause concern, however. Hardly the ink with which the signatures to the Geneva accords were made had dried when statements contradicting the spirit and the letter of the Geneva accords started being made. In this connection the Soviet side would like to emphasize again that the rights and obligations of the parties to the accords stem from their texts. Any deviation from the recorded accords can harm the cause of the Afghan settlement and impair the moral prestige of a state that broke the obligation assumed before the whole world.

Establishment of peace on Afghan soil becomes quite feasible with the signing of the Geneva accords. These agreements create conditions for the solution of Afghanistan's internal affairs without outside interference, without further bloodshed.

The Afghan Government's known proposals about ceasefire and national reconciliation remain fully valid. The absolute majority of the Afghans met the conclusion of the Geneva accords with approval and hope. It is only the Peshawar-based recalcitrant opposition that persists in its unwillingness to recognize the results of the Geneva process and refuses to stop military operations. Its bellicose statements are nothing new. They only show that the sense of responsibility for the destiny of their country and their people is lacking. Pakistan--whose government signed the obligation not to tolerate the presence in its territory of political and other groups whose aim is to conduct subversive activity against the government of Afghanistan, their hiding at camps and bases or in any other way, their organization, training, financing and arming--should now have its weighty say.

The entire international community now follows the developments in Afghanistan with ever closer attention. The policy of national reconciliation conducted by the Afghan leadership headed by President Najibullah has yielded its first results prior to the signing of the Geneva accords and increasingly draws to its side different strata of Afghan society. Many Afghans outside their country declare in favor of this policy, too.

The leadership of the Republic of Afghanistan proclaimed its readiness to start a dialogue with all the opposition forces, including those who continue the fighting. It is now generally recognized that the implementation of this line is a matter for the Afghans themselves.

It is only they that can find ways, which will be acceptable to their country, to reach agreement on a nationwide basis. The process can be assisted by others as well.

But it is important in the first place not to take any outside actions that could aggravate the situation and complicate the attainment of mutual understanding between the Afghans themselves.

Mediation efforts by U.N. Under-Secretary-General Diego Cordovez could also be useful in this context.

The Soviet Government believes that abidance by the Geneva accords is the most important condition for restoring peace to long-suffering Afghanistan and for its assertion as an independent, nonaligned, neutral nation.

The agreements signed in Geneva mark a fundamentally new phase not only in the Soviet-Afghan relationship, but also in the resolution of the entire Afghanistan problem.

To help the Afghan people arrange a peaceful life is a duty for all statesmen, politicians, community leaders and all honest people.

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